

Oral Exam- posted 6/29/10

Interpreter Candidate *"I passed the California court interpreter written exam two years ago and I've taken the Mandarin oral interpreting exam once. When can I take the Mandarin oral exam again?"*

Ayanna Cage, AOC *"In early 2011 certification exams will be offered in Arabic, Cantonese, Korean, Mandarin, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Vietnamese and in English for registered interpreters."*

Interpreter Candidate *"Didn't California used to have more exams in certified languages?"*

Ayanna Cage, AOC *"Yes, that's true. Eastern Armenian, Western Armenian, Japanese, and Tagalog are still certified languages, but exams in these languages will not be offered during the early 2011 oral exam administration. We recommend that candidates waiting to take the oral interpreting exam in these languages use this additional time to study and practice for the exam and take it as it is available. Check our web site occasionally for updated information."*

Interpreter Candidate *"Okay, let's talk about retaking the oral exam. As I mentioned, I've taken the Mandarin oral exam once. How many more times can I take the oral interpreting exam once it is offered?"*

Ayanna Cage, AOC *"Our current retake policy allows you to take the oral exam in a specific language a total of four times with no time limits. However, since we are adopting new exams, all candidates will be given a total of four more times to take the oral exams in their languages."*

Interpreter Candidate *"Do you mean I will have four more opportunities even though I have already taken the exam once?"*

Ayanna Cage, AOC *"Yes. Because we are working with new test content, you will be permitted to take the oral exam a total of four times starting January 1, 2011. There are no time limits."*

Interpreter Candidate *"What happens if I don't pass the oral exam within the four new attempts?"*

Ayanna Cage, AOC *"As before, you will have to start over at the beginning of the process by taking and passing the written exam."*

Interpreter Candidate *"Okay. Let's discuss the actual exams. What's in the oral exams?"*

Ayanna Cage, AOC *“The study conducted by ALTA Language Services concluded that the oral interpreting exams developed by the Consortium are very similar to the exams previously used by California. The exams are similar in structure, content, and level of difficulty. Content is based on actual courtroom transcripts, and the exam tests your ability to interpret in sight translation, consecutive interpretation, and simultaneous interpretation. To find out more about the exam content, you can review the Test Construction Manual and the Oral Exam Overview posted on our web site.”*

Interpreter Candidate *“Are the scoring processes different now?”*

Ayanna Cage, AOC *“Oral exams are still scored by a minimum of two raters located throughout the country. Candidates in certified languages are assessed based on the number of objective scoring units interpreted correctly.”*

Interpreter Candidate *“What are scoring units?”*

Ayanna Cage, AOC *“Scoring units are pre-selected words and phrases that represent language that interpreters will encounter on the job, for example legal terminology, grammatical structures, and slang.”*

Interpreter Candidate *“What score will I need to pass?”*

Ayanna Cage, AOC *“To pass, you will need to correctly interpret 70 percent of the scoring units on each part of the exam. To learn more, you can also watch the video on our website about scoring and rating processes.”*

Interpreter Candidate *“What about the English oral proficiency exam for registered interpreters? Did that process change?”*

Ayanna Cage, AOC *“No. There have been no changes to the English oral proficiency exam for registered interpreters.”*

Interpreter Candidate *“Thank you for answering my questions! With testing coming up, I’d better get back to preparing for the exam.”*

Ayanna Cage, AOC *“Sounds good. Remember, being bilingual is not enough. Court interpreting requires a great deal of skill, so continuous practice and study is essential to prepare for the exams and the profession.”*